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BOOK REVIEWS

FRENCH POLICY AND THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE, by Edwin F. Corwin, Professor of Politics, Princeton University. Princeton University Press, 1916; pp. x, 430.

It was peculiarly fortunate for the cause of the American Revolution that the sympathies of the French people and the policies of the French foreign office which knew no diplomatic methods save those of secret diplomacy, were for once heartily in accord in support of the American revolutionists. Professor Corwin in this book deals entirely with the complicated and obscure political plots and counter-plots which eventually led France to espouse openly the cause of the revolting colonies. The whole question of the timely aid France gave to America has, of course, a very particular value at the present time when this country is preparing to repay the debt we have owed France for so long. That the author does not deal with the social conditions and the sympathetic temper of the French people, which in a real sense underlay the action of France, but confines himself wholly to *haute politique* does not in any sense take away from the value of his work. He reveals a new side to this very interesting phase in our contest for independence, at least one that will be new to those who are not deeply read in American history. The tendency heretofore has been to emphasize the popular and moral support of the French people and to overlook the political reasons which led to the action of the king and his ministers. The author has throughout relied upon the monumental researches of Doniol and has carefully fortified every point by copious references and quotations.

The opening chapters set forth the reason why the French Government eventually came to the aid of the American Revolutionists. France was jealous of England's growing power and her predominant place in European politics, always increasing at the expense of France, now far from what she had been in the days of *Le Roi Soleil*. Vergennes, the French secretary of state, thought he found in England's colonies a vulnerable spot. A follower of the old mercantilist principles and of old-school diplomacy, he was nevertheless a politician of no mean ability. His policy was far-sighted, but inasmuch as there was no immediate benefit accruing, he found the King and many of his ministers either out and out opponents to his ideas, or at least indifferent. Turgot, the minister of finance, was active in his opposition. France, in his view, was in no position to incur the heavy expense involved and her navy was weak. She was also bound to Spain by a treaty which obligated either nation to come to the aid of the other in case of war.

A very benevolent neutrality seemed the only way out and led to a secret provision of funds and arms which culminated February 6th, 1778, in the

secret "Treaty of Amity and Commerce" which proved the first step toward the open support which France eventually gave to America.

While the motive underlying Vergennes' policy was an eventual weakening of England through the loss of her colonies, an immediate excuse was necessary to secure the support of the King and his ministry. Vergennes therefore bred the notion that the West Indian colonies of France were in danger of an attack from a coalition of England and the rebellious colonies. Eventually this notion carried the day and overthrew Turgot's opposition. There is some question as to the weight to be attached to this argument. Professor C. H. Van Tyne, of the University of Michigan, who has had access to documents unknown to Doniol, attaches much importance to this possible coalition, as the deciding factor, and a portion of his argument in the *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW* of April, 1916, is discussed at some length in a long footnote by the author.

New light as to this whole period is to be found in the chapters devoted to the interminable diplomatic intrigues with Spain who was, to say the least, an unwilling participant. Even more interesting are the discussions of the preliminaries to peace in the later chapters. The American representatives were in one way ill-equipped to deal with the indirect and Machiavellian traditions of European diplomacy, but by their very honesty, persistence and straight-forward attitude, they eventually won their point.

The author has succeeded to a remarkable degree in compressing an amount of dry documentary history within the limits of this volume. Every one who reads it must feel that he owes a debt to the author for his clear and vivid presentation of the material so long buried in French archives. Though the author is at times betrayed by the very defects of his qualities into a certain roughness of style, and occasional repetitions and a few typographical errors are to be noted, he has succeeded remarkably in giving a forceful and direct account. The book is well printed and contains valuable appendices and an index.

W. B. SHAW.

A TREATISE ON THE AMERICAN AND ENGLISH WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION LAWS, by Arthur B. Honnold, of the Minnesota Bar. Vernon Law Book Co., Kansas City, Mo., 1917; 2 Vols., pp. xxi, 1905.

At the date of the preface, the author states that Compensation Acts "have been adopted by the Federal Government, thirty-two states, and many foreign countries". "The underlying principles have become sufficiently fixed to make of value a text-book based on the opinions of the courts and various commissions and officers vested with the power and duty of enforcing these acts."

Volume one treats of these general principles under eight chapters, and two hundred and fifty-two sections, and Chapter IX of twenty more sections, giving selected forms for all of the important steps necessary to be taken in prosecuting a claim for compensation. The headings of these chapters are: Workmen's Compensation Acts in General, including history, purpose,